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Housekeepers' Chat

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "New Window Shades for Old." Information from Ruth O'Brien, Division of Textiles and Clothing, Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A. Also recipe for Candied Apples.

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"What about window shades, Aunt Sammy?" asks a western housekeeper. "You have given us pertinent advice about curtains, but nary a word about the shades. Is it wise to send one's husband to the furniture store, and tell him to bring home enough shades for the living room windows? We'd like to know."

I shall tell you what I can about buying window shades. But first, let me warn you -- unless your husband is an interior decorator, unless he knows a great deal more than most men do about window shades, better not trust him to buy them. He'll send home the shades (providing he doesn't forget), but they will be too large or too small, too dark or too light, too cheap or too expensive. Not that I am casting any reflections on your husband; it's just that the average man doesn't give much thought to shades and curtains -- he's too busy earning a living.

What's that? Here I've called her husband an average man! Forgive me, Clementine.

But speaking of shades, most of us know very little about this household necessity. It's very seldom that we buy window shades, but when we do, we should know how to get the most value for our money.

There are certain things, according to Miss O'Brien there are certain things we had better decide for ourselves before we go shopping for shades. One of them is how much we can spend on each window. Another is what we expect from a window shade.

In some houses, the artistic effect may far outshadow all other considerations; in others it may be wise to hang less durable shades, with the idea of buying new ones in a short time. In still other homes (in mine, for instance), it is greater economy to get a very good shade that can be cleaned and refreshed, by turning the top to the bottom.

Let's pretend this morning that we are going to town to buy window shades. Before we leave home, let's decide on the color, and general type. Of course we want the shades to present a uniform appearance from the outside of the house, and harmonize with its style and color. At the same time the shades must harmonize with the color schemes of the inside, too.

In many homes, duplex shades, dark on the outside and light on the inside, are used. I have duplex shades on my windows now. They are not quite satisfactory, because part of the dark color is reflected through the shade, and gives an undesirable tint to the inside. Recently I have seen some good-looking translucent, light-colored shades. These soften the glare of the sun, and allow the diffused light to enter the room and give an attractive daytime effect. Some of them have delicately colored figures on the inside, which add a great deal of decorative value.

We have decided how much we can spend for shades, we have noted the number of windows in the house, and taken the measurements. Now we shall look for a merchant who will give us some samples of shade cloth. He may not be much in favor of giving us samples; however, we shall deal with him gently but firmly. For it is impossible to judge values in window shades, if we are limited to looking at the ready-made articles. We want to test these samples for wear, light, and cleaning properties.

Rubbing between the hands is about the only way to test for wear. We'll rub a sample between our hands, and then hold it up to the light. Has the sizing, or starchy filling, broken or rubbed off? Is the sample full of cracks? Perhaps we'd better look at a better grade of window shade.

The only satisfactory way of cleaning window shades, which is known at present, is to scrub them with a brush, using a warm suds of neutral soap. Some commercial laundries are now developing window-shade cleaning departments, which will be of great convenience to us. In view of this fact, we'll see whether our samples of window shades will take kindly to soap and water. Of course the window-shade merchant may shake his head, when he finds out what we're going to do with the samples. He may shake his head and remark that times aren't what they used to be, when he could sell a woman anything he pleased, and she wasn't going around asking for samples.

That's just the point, Mister Merchant. Maybe we women-shoppers aren't so gullible as we used to be. Maybe.

Now are we through inspecting window shades? Not yet. We must look at the rollers. You know what havoc can be wrought by a temperamental shade roller. It is unwise to save too much money on this item. We must remember that the cloth can be replaced on the roller, and a good roller used for many years--if Johnny Junior will please not try to find out what makes a window shade work. A good roller is of seasoned, straight-grained wood that will not warp. It has a strong spring.

When the salesman learns that we really know something about shades, he may ask us what diameter of roller we prefer. A roller one inch in diameter is usually of better quality than a smaller one, although there are good rollers on the market whose diameter is fifteen-sixteenths of an inch.

While we are looking at shades, let's not forget to glance at the slat which is placed in the hem. Can't you just imagine the salesman's comment after we're gone?

"Never saw the like," he'll say. "Never saw the like, the way that woman looked at shades. She even looked at the slat in the hem! Never saw the like!"

Well, Mister Salesman, it's our hard-earned money we're spending, and some way, we don't like to feel that we are being "gypped."

Time to go home now, as soon as we stop over there for a tin candy box-- a tin candy box to pack Junior's candied apples in.

Have I told you about Junior's Chocolate-Coated Candied Apples? They are one of the most delicious Christmas confections I've ever made. You know what I mean--apples cut into pieces, cooked in honey syrup, dried, and dipped into melted chocolate. Just the thing for children.

If you'd like to have the recipe--wait just a minute, till I see whether I have my Chocolate-Coated Candied Apples recipe. Here it is, in my pocket. Only five ingredients, for this Christmas dainty:

1 cup sugar	1/4 teaspoon salt, and
1 cup honey	3 tart well-flavored apples
1/2 cup water	

Five ingredients, for Candied Apples: (Repeat).

Prepare a sirup of the sugar, honey, water, and salt by boiling for 2 or 3 minutes. Wash, core, and pare the apples. Cut into half-moon shaped pieces, about half an inch thick. Drop into the sirup, and cook rapidly until the apples are transparent and practically all the sirup has been absorbed. Lift onto waxed paper to dry. Cut up into small pieces some of the cake chocolate made especially for dipping candies, put into a shallow dish over hot water to melt slightly, and stir with the fingers until the whole mass has melted. Dip the pieces of apple into the melted chocolate, until well coated, and place on waxed paper to dry, which requires only a short time when this method of coating is used. Pack the apple candies in layers, between sheets of waxed paper.

Tomorrow I'll give you another menu.

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